

Great Ashfield Village News



ISSUE NUMBER 9

SUMMER 2017

Parish Council 2017

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408728

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241045

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Minutes of all Parish Council meetings can be accessed online at One Suffolk

greatashfield.onesuffolk.net/

All Saints' Church

Priest in Charge

Revd Katharine Valentine
01359 235095

Details of all church services and Benefice news can be found on www.vcnews.org.uk or contact your Church Warden

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Parish Council News

The Council has met three times since the last newsletter, one scheduled meeting and two planning sessions. Highways issues, mainly speeding, are still a cause for concern. After a fair bit of admin, staring at maps and trying to consult with Suffolk Highways we now have poles in Great Ashfield (including Long Thurlow) to carry Speed Indicator Display (SID) signs (as used in Elmswell). We are in the process of registering a Community Speedwatch group for training and planning how to raise funds for an SID. The Play-group Committee kindly offered funds at the March Council meeting that will cover some of the costs. If you volunteered for Speedwatch in the past we will be contacting you again.

The Millennium Book, *Great Ashfield Year 2000*, is now out for re-binding and the village sign has been repaired.

There is **still** one vacancy on the Parish Council. If you are interested come to the next meeting, or apply to the Parish Clerk who can lend you some guides, or talk to any councillor in the panel opposite.

Talking of vacancies there are committee vacancies in all our village organisations. None of these roles is onerous but it is about sharing the work in a friendly group to make it fun rather than a chore. If you can help then please do contact a committee member – see the panels in this Newsletter.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 25 May at 7.30pm in the Lord Thurlow Hall following the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm. There is no meeting in July. The Council meets after the summer break on Thursday 28 September.

Arthur Peake, Chairman

Suffolk Constabulary

Police in Norfolk and Suffolk issued more than 200 tickets in January to drivers caught using their mobile phone while behind the wheel. Driving while using a mobile phone is one of the 'fatal four' offences which makes you more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a collision, alongside speeding, drink driving and not wearing a seatbelt.

Legislative changes earlier this year the penalty for using a mobile phone behind the wheel is now a £200 fine and six points on your licence.

To pass on information about any incident to Suffolk Police either phone 101 or visit

www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us/report-something/report-crime

Dates for your diary

Thursday 25 May

Parish Council meeting, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.30pm
Village residents are invited to attend

Friday 2 June

Village Inn, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.30pm

Thursday 8 June

Parliamentary Election, Polling Station, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.00 am to 10.00pm

Thursday 8 June

WI open meeting, All Saints' Church, 7.30pm *The Yanks are Coming, by Linda Scoles*
[note change of venue]

Friday 7 July

BBQ and Pub night, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.30pm
Burgers and sausages from Elmswell Butchers with a glass of Pimms or your favourite beer

Thursday 13 July

WI evening outing to Fullers' Mill Gardens with guided tour*

Thursday 10 August

WI garden meeting*

Friday Friday 1 September

Village Inn, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.30pm

Thursday 14 September

WI meeting, Lord Thurlow Hall, 7.30pm *From Pharmacist to Patient, by Paul Heeks*

*Contact Lyn Andrews 259637 for more details

Lord Thurlow Hall

Committee members

Roy Barker Hon Chairman and Treasurer *pro tem* 241045

Sue Howes, Hon Secretary 242983

Sue Perkin-Ball, Hall Draw Organiser 242422

Peggy Elms 408357

For hall bookings contact Di Barker 241045

Mid Suffolk District Council Annual Report

Mid Suffolk District Council continues to work well in some very difficult and challenging financial times. Here are some bullet points from the MSDC annual report (in no particular order):

- Green energy income up: £460K of income generated this year from solar panels installed on our properties.
- 20 tonnes of glass being collected a month, extra on top of the bring sites 2000 tonnes plus, by our business waste team.
- New Council Houses: we are building 65 new council houses across the district, with 14 already occupied.
- Devolution has come and gone with no positive support from other councils outside of Suffolk.
- Moving the HQ for MSDC to Endeavour House in Ipswich, and call-in centres for face-to-face contact has been agreed.
- The Council provided over £725K in grants to community groups for improvements to village halls etc.
- Number of empty homes down: 97 brought back into use generating an extra £130K income.
- The Planning Department is being inundated with many large applications in the villages along the A14, Woolpit, Elmswell and Thurston in particular.
- Funding for community led housing up: £430K secured DCLG grants for affordable homes.
- New Chief Executive has just been appointed.
- Still collecting over 100 tonnes of litter off the A14 (a Forth Bridge issue)

I am always available for residents' problems and try to get to as many parish councils as possible.

Roy Barker 01359 241045 or roy.barker@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Village Hall News

The Lord Thurlow Hall is open as 'The Village Inn' on the FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH (except August and January) 7.30 to 10.30pm, where everyone is welcome.

Would you like to get involved in village life and get to know people? Why not volunteer to run the bar for the evening? We are also looking for new committee members to join our friendly team. At present, we require a Chairperson, Treasurer and additional members to join the committee and assist (whatever hours you have) in organising fund raising events for further modernisation. There are usually around four meetings a year. If you would like to join, please contact Roy or Di Barker on 241045.

See village diary (opposite) for future events

PATIENT SERVICES AT WOOLPIT HEALTH CENTRE

Recently, members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) at Woolpit Health Centre (WHC) attended a meeting with doctors, to discuss changes to two services: Blood Tests (phlebotomy) and Leg Ulcer Care. I am one of the members of the PPG, and am writing this to inform you of what is happening.

PHLEBOTOMY

Woolpit Health Centre requires about 14,500 blood tests annually. Up till now, the practice itself undertook 3500 of these, 7000 were done at West Suffolk Hospital and the remainder, 4000, were done by the visiting phlebotomists, at their appointed time at Woolpit. The service of the visiting phlebotomist has ended, with the withdrawal of the service as at 1 April 2017, and those 4000 blood tests will have to be performed at West Suffolk Hospital. The surgery itself can slightly increase the number of tests it carries out but inevitably, a lot of people will no longer be able to avoid going to the hospital. Every possible option as to how one might avoid the inconvenience this will cause to patients, has been considered, and under current funding, contractual and administrative constraints, WHC cannot find a way around this.

LEG ULCER CLINIC

Patients suffering from leg ulcers are currently treated at Woolpit Health Centre's excellent leg ulcer clinic, however, WHC has been advised that this service is also to stop at Woolpit, with the treatment being undertaken by Suffolk Community Healthcare (SCH) at a location yet to be decided. The service is scheduled to stop on 1 October 2017. Patients will be treated at first for six weeks at Woolpit, and then be referred to new treatment under SCH. Woolpit Health Centre is concerned that there can potentially be a long waiting time between the end of its management of patients' problems and obtaining ongoing treatment under SCH.

In both the case of phlebotomy and leg ulcer care, it is inevitable that patients will have to travel further, some perhaps with debilitating problems, to receive care, which was previously provided in WHC.

This is directly contradictory to the Government mantra of 'local services for local people'

And it has become clear that where anomalies exist within the system, however good they may be, they will come to an end. The two services mentioned here are such anomalies, but they are also what is best for the affected patients, having evolved for us in our locality over many years. Thus the quality of your healthcare will fall, and it is reasonable to assume further services will come under similar threats. NHS policies appear to be working towards large Health Centres with perhaps a minimum size of twice the number of patients on the list at WHC. That is fine in large conurbations, but to achieve this in a rural area such as this, the catchment area could become geographically untenable, yet the threat is there, and growing. It is the thin end of a worrying wedge. I should emphasise that this article is specific to Woolpit Health Centre, in West Suffolk.

We need your support as patients affected by these changes. Members of the PPG are writing to the relevant Directors of this area's Clinical Commissioning Group, but if you feel concerned as to how these changes will cause you difficulties in obtaining the healthcare you rely upon, and you want to try to have these decisions reviewed for the good of yourselves and other patients at WHC, we would ask you to write to our MP:

Jo Churchill, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or jo.churchill.mp@parliament.uk

Receiving numerous letters and emails from her constituents will make our MP take the subject forward.

It was clear from our meetings at WHC that the team there is very concerned for the patients under their care, and that they have explored every avenue possible to avoid these issues, but it seems now to be only the political will of our Parliamentary representatives who can push for changes of opinion.

Alex Jarrett
on behalf of the Woolpit Health Centre Patient Participation Group